

St. Olaf Study Travel

Go behind the seen

In the Footsteps of Philip, Alexander the Great, St. Paul and Beyond: Three Balkan Countries

Greece, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Bulgaria

June 11–26, 2010

Program leaders: Jim May, provost and dean of the college and professor of classics, and Donna May, teacher

This unique program brings us to three Balkan countries: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). We'll wind our way through the powerful kingdoms of Philip II and Alexander the Great, as well as places visited by St. Paul, and later occupied by the Romans. These three influential men changed warfare, worldviews, politics, and religion, among much else, and inspired countless future leaders who studied their legacies.

We start in Thessaloniki (to whose inhabitants, the Thessalonians, St. Paul addressed one of his famous letters). We'll study areas important in the history of the rise of Philip and Alexander the Great, including Edessa, Pella, and Vergina, the site of perhaps the most spectacular archaeological find of the 20th century, the Royal Tomb of King Philip II.

We will then make a 5-day excursion into FYROM and Bulgaria, visiting, among other places, Lake Ohrid (a UNESCO World Heritage region), several impressive Orthodox churches and monasteries, and the Hellenistic/Roman sites of Heraclea and Stobi. Returning to Greece, we will tour Philippi, where St. Paul was imprisoned, adjacent to the site where he baptized Lydia, the first person to be baptized on European soil.

We continue by ferry to two northern Aegean islands, Thassos (famous for its ancient marble quarries) and Samothrace, site of the ancient Sanctuary of the Great Gods. Our final days in Greece will reveal a side of the country rarely witnessed by tourists as we visit two environmentally protected areas, the Dadia National Park, home of most European raptors and vultures, and the Evros Delta (on the Greece/Turkey border), offering a diversity of habitats for more than 330 bird varieties, controlled grazing (including cattle and wild horses), agricultural activity, as well as commercial fishing and hunting.

Program Leaders

Provost and Dean of the College and Professor of Classics Jim May is the author of *Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethos* and an annotated translation co-authored with Jakob Wisse of Cicero's *On the Ideal Orator*. With his St. Olaf colleague Anne Groton, he wrote a textbook, *38 Latin Stories*. Also the author of many articles on Cicero, classical rhetoric and Latin pedagogy, Jim recently edited a volume of essays, *A Companion to Cicero: Rhetoric and Oratory*. He is currently working on a Ciceronian student reader, containing Latin passages and commentary from several of the orator's most notable works.

When not immersed in his role as provost and dean of the college, Jim competes in handball, restores antique tractors and old cars, builds harpsichords, plays baroque instruments, chants

Gregorian-style and sings in a Renaissance chamber choir. Besides having visited Greece more than two dozen times, his greatest claim to fame is having been one of 170 rowers who powered the trireme *Olympias*, the replica of an ancient Greek warship, around the Aegean Sea in 1990 and again in 1993.

Jim and Donna, a professional singer, choir director and high school music teacher, have two sons, Joseph and Michael, both graduates of St. Olaf.

Personal Perspectives: What Previous Participants Say

“It was, as I anticipated, a fascinating and illuminating experience.”

“Well organized, educational as well as fun.”

“Thank you for doing such an outstanding job! We really appreciate all of your hard work ‘behind the scenes!’ St. Olaf continues to set the standard for educational trips!”

I was on the 2006 trip to Greece, enjoyed that immensely, and felt the same about this year’s. Jim and Donna May, Dimitri Cocconi [our tour operator] and Stella Galani [our national guide] are an unbeatable combination. And, just as in 2006, we were fortunate enough to have a great mix of friendly, interesting folks on the trip. Thanks for another unforgettable experience.”

What was your favorite “behind the seen” experience? “Standing in the shade of a tree at Troy, listening to Jim read the story of Priam begging Achilles for the release of his son Hector. As Jim says, that was BIG!”

What to Expect

Greece is a mix of modern and rustic. Large cities have all the usual amenities, while smaller towns and rural areas may feel like a step back in time, with an unhurried air, and warm, friendly people.

Greece is not handicapped accessible. Though we will transfer between cities by air-conditioned private coach, you should be prepared for lots of walking. Greece is full of tiny streets, mountains, hills and dales — places a bus can’t get to. You should be capable of walking a *minimum* of one mile at a time over uneven terrain and *up to* five miles per day, of climbing stairs that may not have handrails, of keeping pace with an active group of travelers on long days of traveling, of dealing with the emotional highs and lows that can occur when experiencing a different culture, and of traveling with a group for several hours each day.

Hotels will be tourist class (typically three or four star) with private baths, air conditioning and English-speaking staff. In smaller towns, we often secure the best hotel available, which may be two star (small sleeping rooms and fewer amenities such as in-room coffee making service).

June weather in Greece is generally delightful — 60s (Fahrenheit) in the evenings, 75-85 during the day. It will start getting warmer as July approaches. Highs could be in the 90s (even high 90s) some days; lows might be in the high 70s or even low 80s. Humidity is fairly low, which means the shade offers relief.

Most days, we will depart the hotel between 8 and 9 a.m.; we will coordinate our departure time to maximize our time at that day’s sites. We will stop for lunch in the early afternoon (usually between 12 noon and 2 p.m.). Often we will resume our program after lunch, visiting another site or museum. We will try to avoid the hottest part of the day, but sometimes being out in the sun will be inevitable. Some days will have several hours of free time; others will have very little or

none at all. We try to return to the hotel in time to relax and freshen up for dinner. Greeks eat dinner much later (particularly in the summer months) than do Americans, and dining for the Greeks is much more than eating; it is time to socialize, sing, dance, and experience fellowship with friends. We generally arrange for our evening meals between 7:30 and 8:30 p.m. This schedule can make for long days on occasion.

You should plan to see your family physician or a travel doctor at least four to six weeks prior to departure, preferably earlier, to talk about routine vaccinations. For more information on travel health, visit cdc.gov or who.it.

Program Fee

The program fee is \$6,990 per person through Feb. 1, 2010. Based on double occupancy, it includes seminars by Jim May, assistance by Donna May and a national guide, roundtrip airfare from Minneapolis/St. Paul, accommodations, breakfast daily and several other group meals, group tours, admissions for group activities, ground transportation and gratuities.

For single occupancy, add \$1,115. To travel “land only” (making your own arrangements to and from Thessaloniki), subtract \$1,700.

After Feb. 1, 2010, the program fee is \$7,150 per person and could be subject to additional airfare.

Continuing Education Units

Approximately 44 hours of continuing education are available.

Register Today

Go “behind the seen” with St. Olaf Study Travel. Register online at stolaf.edu/studytravel, call toll-free 866-255-6523 or fax 507-646-8232. A deposit of \$500 per person guarantees your space.